

RECREATION AND PARKS

The Community is fortunate in the park land surrounding it. The Gunpowder Falls State Park is undeveloped in the Plan Area except for hiking and riding trails. Recreation such as hiking, fishing, and canoeing are provided along both the Little and the Big Gunpowder Falls. The name for the falls, in fact, derives from the fall-off from the Piedmont area to the tidal area, which occurs in the Community boundary. Some of the best trout fishing in the State is in the Little Gunpowder east and west of Harford Road. The Big Gunpowder is nationally recognized for its canoeing and kayaking, especially in spring. The Smithsonian museum has selected a portion of the woodland along the Big Gunpowder east of Harford Road as the finest example of upland hardwood trees in the mid-Atlantic. The Natural Heritage Program has documented several sites of rare and endangered plant species within the Park. The Park truly is a unique resource.



A Master Plan was adopted for the Park in the early 1980's and called for several improvements in the area. A nature study center is planned for the Park east of Harford Road and south of Mount Vista Road. This area also is being considered for a National Wildlife Area, which would preclude any such use. This designation, if adopted, should cause an amendment to the Master Plan. Parking lots also are planned along some of the major arterial roadways for access into the Park.

Since the adoption of the Master Plan a major change has occurred in Park planning affecting the community. The Park headquarters has been moved to the Jerusalem Mill site on Jerusalem Road across the Little Gunpowder in Harford County. Primary access to the facility is from Belair Road through Kingsville. The location of the facility includes the restoration of the Mill, a historic structure, and a centerpiece of the Community. The location of the headquarters in Kingsville will provide the area with additional personnel and supervision as well as provide the Community with an important historical and educational resource.

In addition to the State Park, Kingsville also has substantial recreational facilities such as tennis courts and ball fields located at the Kingsville Athletic Fields off of Franklinville Road in Upper Falls. Although the location of the facility is off of local roads, it provides a major resource to the youth leagues as well as picnic facilities for families. Additional recreational facilities are located at the Kingsville Elementary School Recreation Center. A soccer field also is provided at St. Stephen's Church near Upper Falls. Merryland Farm Park, located at 12901 Bottom road, is a 159 acre county park acquired via donation. It is dedicated primarily to equestrian activities.

RECOMMENDATION:

5. THAT THE COUNTY WORK IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE COMMUNITY IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GUNPOWDER STATE PARK MASTER PLAN.

The State, the County and the Community should work together to prevent duplication of service in recreation and parks. Baltimore County should also plan for adequate facilities in areas where Park projects are planned. Since the local residents are the ones most affected by park plans, it would be appropriate for the State and the County to seek input from the affected community, including the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy and the Greater Kingsville Civic Association.



"...hiking, fishing and canoeing are provided along both the Little and the Big Gunpowder Falls."

GREENWAY AREAS

Baltimore County's Master Plan proposes three (3) greenways in the plan area (See Map 3). Greenways are corridors of open space that link parks, stream valleys, historic sites and natural areas for a variety of uses from protected wildlife corridors to hiking, bicycling and horseback trails. Greenways which are open to the general public frequently are close to major roadways and parking areas.

One proposed greenway parallels Harford Road south along an unnamed tributary of the Little Gunpowder south from the Little Gunpowder until it crosses Sunshine Avenue. The path system would connect with a tributary of the Big Gunpowder, called Sweathouse Branch, and follow it to the Big Gunpowder.



Another proposed Greenway already has been acquired in part by the County. It will follow Broad Run north from the Big Gunpowder, cross Belair Road and proceed to Sunshine Avenue. The greenway then utilizes the right-of-way of Sunshine Avenue as a connector to Harford Road. At that point, the greenway will follow the same unnamed tributary mentioned in the preceding paragraph and continue to the Little Gunpowder.

The Master Plan identifies a third greenway located between Jerusalem Road and the Little Gunpowder river. Following the course of two unnamed tributaries of the Little Gunpowder, the proposed greenway would establish a trail circuit by using Jerusalem road as a connector on the west and Jericho road on the east. Based on a more detailed review of this proposal, the Kingsville Plan amends the route of this Master Plan greenway. The amendment removes the northern tributary from the trail circuit and recommends instead, that the trail stay within the Gunpowder State park to its junction with Jerusalem Road. The trail then utilizes the right-of-way of Jerusalem Road to its junction with the stream valley trail immediately south of Chapman Road (See Map 3).

The primary means of acquiring greenways is through the development process. As properties seek development approval, open space regulations require in-fee greenway dedications to Baltimore County. An alternative to in-fee greenway dedications would be the granting of a greenway easement.

Allowing the development process to serve as an acquisition strategy is a reactive approach. A proactive approach is the purchase of greenway easements along priority segments of designated greenways. This approach would be useful when development projects are not imminent. The Baltimore County Department of Recreation and Parks has established a Capital Budget Category for this purpose.

Greenways open to the public must be of sufficient width to permit people, with no degradation to the environment including resident wildlife and stream valley buffers. The Community greenways follow the courses of several streams, and consideration must be given to the impact of the public on the areas. The three proposed greenways would be low impact systems. Greenways operate as shared systems for wildlife habitat as well as human relaxation. Greenways for the purpose of providing wildlife corridors with little or no public access may be more attractive to property owners from whom easements are sought. In a very real sense the greenways already exist. The need is to protect the areas and to foster a community sense of appreciation for the resources and their contributions to our quality of life.

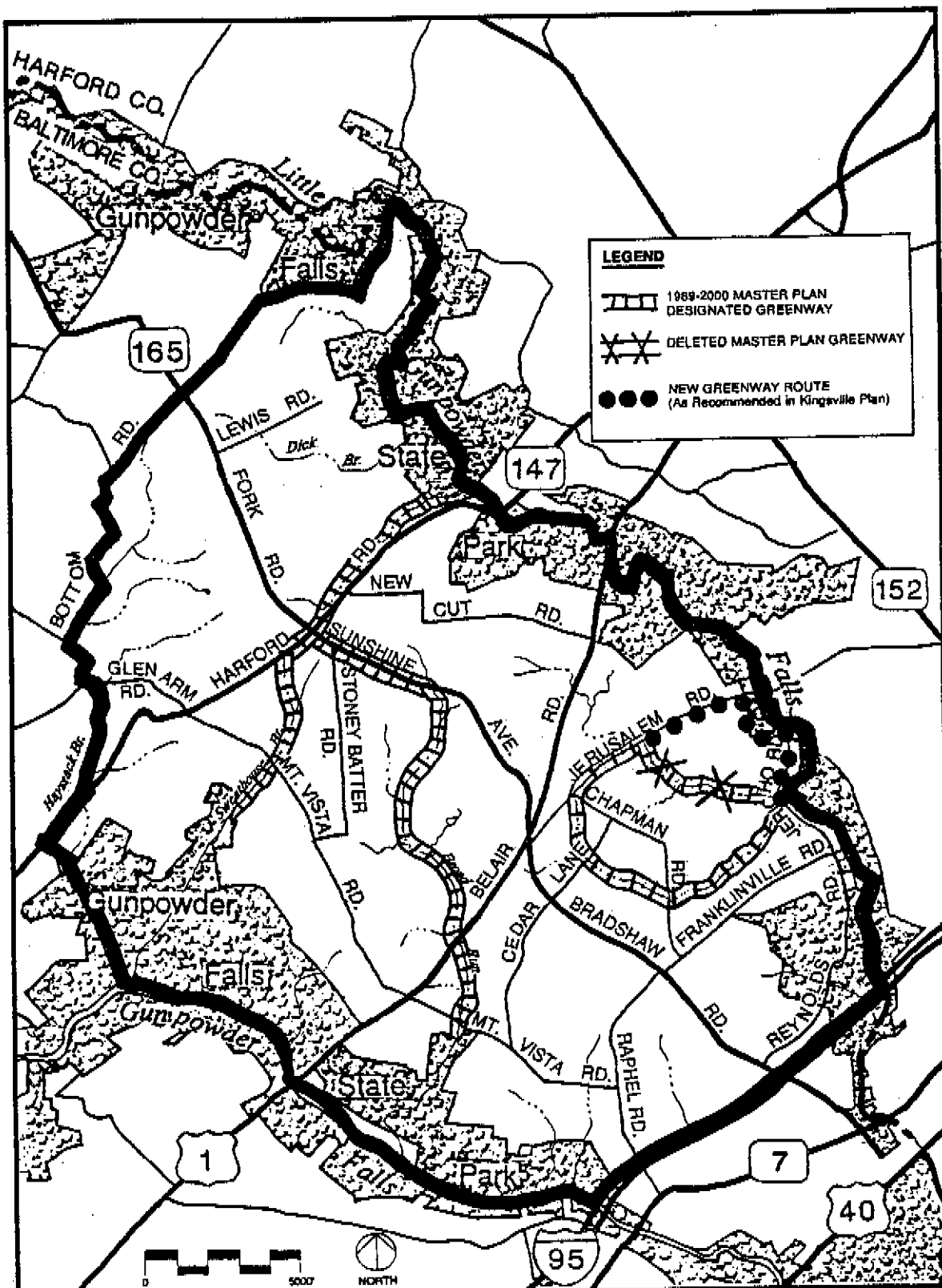
Maintenance of the greenway system is a major issue. Greenways are public easements acting as right of ways. Public resources to maintain the greenway system, however, are very limited. Failure to properly maintain the system could cause harm to the fragile stream valley environment as well as cause hardship on adjacent property owners. Adoption of segments of the Greenway system by local groups assisted by County personnel may be one alternative. In the study area many of the streams are part of the "Adopt a Stream" program and are maintained by individuals or by groups. Local churches and scouting groups as well as the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy membership are ready sources of volunteers.

The interests of the adjacent property owners also must not be ignored. Permitting the general public access for recreational use to areas adjacent to residences and farms may cause problems. The concept of unlimited public access may hinder acquisition of easements for the greenways as will the structuring of the right-of-ways to be required. Rather than stating that areas of specified width be acquired, a preferable alternative may be to acquire property with individual segment width based on that segment's characteristics.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

6. THAT THE COUNTY PROCEED WITH THE RESERVATION OF THE GREENWAY AREAS LOCATED WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AS DESIGNATED IN THE 1989-2000 BALTIMORE COUNTY MASTER PLAN AND AS AMENDED BY THE KINGSVILLE PLAN.

Greenways will serve to enhance the natural resources of forests and stream valleys not just for local residents, but for all County residents.



Greenways
Greater Kingsville Area

Map 3

7. THAT THE COUNTY PARTICIPATE IN PROGRAMS WITH COMMUNITY GROUPS FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF GREENWAY AREAS.

The County should work with local Community groups and school organizations to provide for volunteer maintenance of the greenway system. A greenway system without proper maintenance could lead to a far worse impact on the environment and neighborhood than the lack of greenways altogether



"The proposed greenways would be low impact systems".